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Michael, L., Murtagh, B., & Price, L. (2016). Where conflict and peace take place: Memorialization, sacralization and post-conflict space. In A. Bjorkdahl, & S. Buckley-Zistel (Eds.), *Spatializing Peace and Conflict Mapping the Production of Places, Sites and Scales of Violence* (pp. 221-241). Palgrave Macmillan.

Published in:

Spatializing Peace and Conflict Mapping the Production of Places, Sites and Scales of Violence

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:

[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

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Where conflict and peace take place

Memorialisation, sacralisation and post-conflict space

Key words: Memorialisation, sacralisation, collaborative planning, discourse, stakeholder, agonism, Maze Long Kesh, Northern Ireland.

Laura Michael, Brendan Murtagh and Linda Price

School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Queens University Belfast, UK.

[A] Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the disruptive potential of memory in peacebuilding processes where and when they materialise in the built environment. There is a diverse literature on how museums, memorials and sculpture are used to signify, electively narrate or even erase history and condensed forms of heritage (Schramm, 2011). However, there is comparatively less work on how such artifacture confront mainstream policy communities concerned with place making in uncertain and vulnerable post-conflict conditions. This analysis aims to evaluate the confrontation between public policy (in planning, urban management and development) with places that are loaded with meaning and memory for ethnic groups determined to legitimate their past as well as their future claims. It sets the context by conceptualisation the technical routines of planning and its concern with mediating interests, communicative action and collaborative practice; with the need to understand how space is socially constructed and in particular how memorialisation elevates place from the mundane to the sacred.

The chapter argues that communicative practices have potential but reduced to techno-rational processes, struggle to accommodate the complex and contradictory subjectivities involved in remaking the past in the service of the present and the future. Empirically, the chapter focuses on the Maze Long Kesh (MLK) prison in Northern Ireland, which was gifted to the newly established Assembly after the 1998 Peace Agreement brought an end to nearly three decades of violence. MLK was built to hold both Loyalist (the UVF and the UDA) and Republican (the IRA and the INLA) paramilitaries and was where 10 IRA and INLA hunger strikers died in 1981 in a protest over their status as political rather than criminal prisoners.

The Northern Ireland conflict centred on competing identities between a Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist bloc who broadly want to maintain the union with Great Britain and a Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community who mainly aspire to the reunification of Ireland. The 1998 *Peace Agreement* established new political institutions, equality legislation and mechanism to release paramilitary processes committed of political offences. The new Northern Ireland Assembly is led by an Executive, which involves the main political parties in a statutory coalition but is now dominated by Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Fein, which was politically linked to the IRA. The Executive is chaired by a First Minister from the DUP and a Deputy First Minister from Sinn Fein. The development of the prison was taken forward by the Strategic Investment Board (SIB), established to oversee post-conflict reconstruction and to use such assets to attract inward investment, rebalance the economy (toward the private sector) and manage the delivery of a number of former military sites handed over to the local administration. The plan for MLK proposed a mixed use development but controversially retained parts of the prison as an interpretative centre along with a new building dedicated to peace to be funded by the EU PEACE III Programme. For Republicans, it is a 'sacred site of martyrdom' (Graham and McDowell, 2007, p. 361) but for Unionists it is a 'Shrine to Terrorism' (The Newsletter, 20 July, 2012, p.1) and ultimately, these ethnic discourses could not be overcome by the power of capital, attempts at collaborative planning or a multitude of governance arrangements designed to bring the protagonists together.

The official response to the planning and development of MLK drew heavily on Collaborative Planning methods, especially a concern for broad ranging consultations

with **stakeholders**, partnership approaches to key themes on prisoners, security interests and education groups and an emphasis on exchanging ideas and experiences (Healey, 2010). The methodology underpinning the case studies aligns with these concepts by mapping and interviewing the key interests, evaluating the performance of governance arenas and assessing the quality of discursive argumentation and how it enabled the project to progress. Ultimately, this all largely failed to resolve the contested nature of the site but it does not mean that discursive practices, governance and mediation are meaningless in such environments. Rather, the chapter highlights the need to reform such **discourse** around realist agonistic, as opposite to antagonistic social relations, worked through governance regimes that have authority and some form of accountability. The MLK case demonstrates how memorialisation competes with modernisation in places coming out of conflict in increasingly unstable and disruptive ways. The chapter concludes by highlighting the normative value of agonistic strategies and in particular the importance of verifiable knowledge in creating and maintaining more authentic discursive practices.

[A] **Memorialisation and reconstruction**

Peacebuilding strategies and the struggle to maintain uncertain post-conflict stability have become increasingly concerned with the normalisation of markets, reconstructing infrastructure and de-risking regions for inward investment and growth (Richmond, 2011). These liberal forms of peace fuse political agreement with opportunities for accumulation as donor strategies aim to 'transact' investment funds as a reward for restoring specifically capitalist behaviours and methods of working (Richmond and Mitchell, 2012). Economic and physical planning are critical in such reconstruction processes and rational ideologies inform local policy making to ensure

that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to enable competition and growth (Richmond, 2011). There is no doubt that the immediacy of peacebuilding requires such discipline and organisational technologies are critical to the effective and efficient provision of services, goods and facilities that people genuinely need. The problem is that such technocratic regimes reify place in a way that can be redesigned through a set of rational procedures, rules and regulatory devices. A dominant and domineering economic **discourse** emerges bolstered by professional planning systems and legal frameworks centred on private property rights, development codes and comprehensive zoning. But, as Yiftachel and Gahem (2004) argue, such certainties are at best limited and at worst harmful where space cannot be simply planned and designed in abstract and reductive ways. This is especially the case where conflict is territorialised and space becomes both a material and non-material resource to be claimed, fought over, won and lost (Till, 2012). Even when hostilities have ended and some form of accommodative politics emerges, *space* remains a potent reminder of what conflict was for and how central it remains to enabling or disabling post-conflict transition (Neill, 2006).

In this respect, heritage becomes a political resource to bolster identity and a connection to a cause, especially where it can be concretised in material artefacts, museums and sites in what Till (2012, p.3) calls 'wounded cities'. Place is thus inextricably linked to memory, memorialising and identity; it is the 'most serviceable reminder of what has happened in our past, what is happening right now and what may come in the future' (Lowenthal, 1979, p.110). Sites and artefacts thus help to reconstitute an 'imagined community' that bind people and place in the service of

contemporary politics, ideological hegemonies and in the marginalisation of a disagreeable 'other' (Anderson, 1983).

As such, places are open to an infinite number of interpretations, becoming 'a palimpsest of overlapping multi-vocal landscapes' that can readily slide into contested and contradictory narratives about history, specific events, victimhood and victory (Saunders, 2001, p.37). Monuments may no longer represent the 'right memory' but can become a collective social symbol with the ability to encapsulate and perpetuate ethno-national identities and claims (Schramm, 2011). The temporal aspects of heritage sites are thus critical as *time* enables a shared experience to be mobilised in which people are connected to events both physically and emotionally. *Post-memory* is as critical, by handing down through the generations, a version of events that reproduces identity and anchors memory in the site of the most intense experiences (Greenspan, 2005). However, Graham and Howard (2008) argue that such site-fixated heritage risks fetishising place and obscures a wider social memory capable of accommodating different recollections and interpretations, a broader time-scape and the importance of intangible social markers and events. MLK has little intrinsic or aesthetic heritage value as a fairly unspectacular 1970s brick built prison but as Graham and Howard argued, the tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible. 'Material heritage sites may comprise no more than empty shells of dubious authenticity but derive their importance from the ideas and values that are projected through them' (Graham and Howard, 2008, p.3).

These ideas and values can be dissonant and reject official historical narratives to present an alternative reading of place and memory. The problem with 'dissonance

arises because of the zero-sum characteristics of heritages, all of which belong to someone and logically, therefore, not to someone else. The creation of any heritage actively or potentially disinherits or excludes those who do not subscribe to, or are embraced within, the terms of meaning attending that heritage' (Graham and Howard, 2008, p.3). This also risks a particularistic approach that limits the potency of a site as political heritage, especially outside dissolute interests and values. As Dwyer (2000, p.667) argued in his consideration of the American Civil Rights movement, the challenge is to 'jump scales' in order to make connections with other struggles and sites of oppression to externally validate memorial processes and the sanctity of a particular place or event. Such legitimization tactics are thus critical in addressing selective and even sectarian modes of remembering that are often associated with dissonant artefacts, museums and memorials.

The intensification of such memory making is best achieved by elevating places to the sacred and whilst pilgrimage trails and religious sites have emerged as a distinct heritage sector, the enshrinement of place is also tactically vital in asserting dominant ethno-national identities (Schramm, 2011). Sturken (2004) argued that such sites develop a quasi-religious, mystic status, becoming frozen, saturated with meaning and unable to exist in an everyday sense. The sacred is also manufactured as 'a cultural technique for creating sanctity ... as a specific form of dealing with historical events' (Eschbach, 2011, p.134). MLK is being socially and materially produced and the interaction between **memorialisation** and **sacralisation** versus the technical specifics of redevelopment and planning reveal the disruptive capacity of place in post-conflict conditions. Planning theorists argue that such disruption needs to be anticipated, identified and built into decision making processes. Difference is a socio-spatial reality

and methods and processes that transform dissonance into productive forms of democracy are at the heart of collaborative planning (Innes and Booher, 2010).

[A] Collaborative Planning

Allmendinger (2009) pointed out that the development of *Collaborative Planning* in the 1980s in the UK was a response to frustration with technical rationality and the onslaught on the profession during the Thatcherite period. He also shows that it has moved planning beyond a preoccupation with *land uses* to become more concerned with the quality of **discourse**, governance and **stakeholder** relations in shaping *spatial* outcomes. Communicative theorists argue that different modes of reasoning and systems of meaning have equivalent status in debate and the task for planners is to create a collective approach based on interaction and dialogue (Healey, 1997). Here, language is vital and in planning, the priority is to establish a process of interactive collective reasoning or **discourse** which, in turn, involves a degree of collaboration, trust and reciprocity:

In the end, what we take to be true and right will lie in the power of the better argument articulated in specific socio-cultural contexts (Healey, 1997, p.54).

These contexts value everyday experiences and an institutional approach, which recognises that human actions and **discourses** are played out within the context of broader economic, labour market and political structures. It suggests that individuals are not passive receptors of these systems but are reflexive agents with the choices and capacity to modify and even transform the structuring forces that influence their lives (Innes and Booher, 2010). Moreover, such practice can work across even the most divided contests and conflicts by acknowledging diversity, interdependence and dialogue within and between protagonists:

Interdependence among the participants is the source of energy as it brings agents together and holds them in this system. Authentic dialogue is the genetic code, providing structure within which agents can process their diversity and interdependence ... Diversity is the hallmark of the informational age. The wide range of life experiences, interests, values, knowledge and resources in society is a challenge for planning and the efforts to produce agreements and collective action (Booher and Innes, 2002, p.227).

Critics point out that **Collaborative** Planning is theoretically limited because it focuses on a critical commentary *about* planning rather than a societal critique *of* planning (Gunder, 2010). The emphasis should not concentrate on the conduct of planners and their practices but rather on the broader power structures and 'legitimisation dynamics within which public agencies often act' (Yiftachel, 2001, p.253). In short, because it does not question the authority embedded in power relations, it lacks the capacity for transformative change, especially for those at the fringes of decision making. Allmendinger (2009) also pointed out that interests have different access to information and can mobilise and interpret knowledge in vastly differing ways: between martyrdom and terrorism; **sacralisation** and profanity; and history and a contrived version of heritage.

Knowledge and how it is used, corrupted and controlled is thus critical to authentic **discourse**, how claims are made and falsified and how public officials understand their professional roles in managing conflict (Murtagh and Ellis, 2011). The task is to acknowledge and domesticate '**antagonism**' (irreconcilable conflicts and interests) into 'agonism', recognising the inevitable competition in land uses that will ultimately impact upon the quality of life for the 'other' (Hiller, 2002). Creating a competitive space in which interests bargain for recognition, precedence and acclaim does not mean that difficulties will disappear but will provoke crucial new ways of thinking about

the nature of 'strife' in power relations. Strife is 'the expressive form of **agonism**' and places an emphasis on **discourse** and how meanings and interpretations can affect planning systems (Pløger, 2004, p.75). Pløger advocates participatory processes that stress openness, temporality, respect for difference and the need to live with inconsistencies and contingency as a way to progress. Ways of achieving this in practice include open-ended processes, politically autonomous yet responsible institutional design, a plurality of **discourses** and an ongoing mutual and critical dialogue between politicians, planners and citizens (Pløger, 2004, p.87). To deliver this, Flyvbjerg (2004, p.295) argues that planning processes and methods should 'focus on values, get close to reality, emphasise little things', as well as studying cases and their contexts including their socio-political meaning and how place is variously used as an economic, cultural and territorial resource.

Healey proposed a methodology for implementing and evaluating such an agenda in specific policy making and planning environments. Her *Institutional Audit* unpacks the circumstances, settings and routines, which might constitute agonistic, strife driven relations into progressive local politics, bargaining and agreement. Here, we need to work through a set of interconnected questions:

- Who has a *stake* in the qualities of the urban regions; how far are these **Stakeholders** actively represented in current governance arrangements?
- In what *arenas* does discussion currently take place? Who gets access to these? Do they interrelate issues from the point of view of everyday life and the business world? Or do they compartmentalise them for the convenience of policy suppliers?
- Through what *routines* and in what *styles* does discussion take place? Do they make room for diverse ways of knowing and ways of valuing representation among **stakeholders** or do dominant styles dominate?
- Through what *policy discourses* are problems identified, claims for policy attention prioritised, and information and new ideas filtered? Do these recognise the diversity among **stakeholders**?

- How is *agreement* reached, how are such agreements expressed in terms of commitments and how is agreement monitored? Is it easy for those who are critical to implementation of the agreement to escape from the commitments? (Healey, 1996, pp.213-4; and Healey, 2010).

This can be used in an evaluative or normative sense and seeks to offer a diagnostic tool both to understand and to rehabilitate conflict in land use processes. By looking at each component we can understand where things go wrong as well as when and how they work. It is not a template but a heuristic that is used here to evaluate the attempts to develop and deliver a comprehensive and agreed plan for the Maze Long Kesh.

[A] The Maze Long Kesh

Widely considered as one of the most significant material representations of Northern Ireland's troubled history (Neill, 2006), the Maze Long Kesh (MLK) prison is located ten miles south-west of Belfast and housed approximately 25,000 prisoners and 15,000 prison staff over the period of the conflict (Coiste, 2003). The 360-acre site was used until the 1960s as a Royal Air Force base and between 1971-72 for the mass internment without trial of mainly Nationalists as a hastily conceived and counterproductive response to the outbreak of violence in the late 1960s (Flynn, 2011). Internees were held in a series of old RAF compounds but as the conflict escalated, these were no longer suited to modern security needs. In 1976 a new prison complex was built based on a set of eight self-contained H-shaped blocks, which themselves became a symbol of British oppression and colonialist punishment among Nationalists and Republicans (see Figure 1). MLK prisoners were treated effectively as Prisoners of War, receiving special privileges on visits, freedom of association and the right to

refuse prison uniforms. In 1976 however, this *Special Category Status* was rescinded, leading to a series of protests both inside and outside the prison. The refusal to wear prison uniforms and dress only in blankets ultimately led to the decision by Republicans to commence a Hunger Strike, a tactic used throughout Irish history to mobilise popular and especially international opposition to British rule.

Figure 1 Maze Long Kesh photographed shortly after its closure (SOURCE)

[B] *Methodology*

Methodologically the case study draws on: participant observation at four meetings of the Reference Groups set up to oversee the project; documentary analysis of political party statements, media coverage and written policies and programmes; and 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews with the key actors in the development process. These included: managerial board members (see the PDU below, n=4 interviews); planning and policy community (3); museum and heritage experts (4); users present on the wider site (2); political and prisoner interests (4); and the local community group (1). The Institutional Audit provides the framework to help conduct the observations, interrogate policy documents and design the interview schedule but also makes explicit the positionality of the researchers and the way in which the data is collected and interrogated. Hermeneutic interpretations of socio-historic events, especially in Northern Ireland privilege the speaker but limit the capacity for challenge, dialectic entanglements and falsification. Researchers clearly need to gather the cultural knowledge to interpret and validate the experience of others and make explicit the frameworks that guide their methods and practice (Milner, 2007). By adopting the

Institutional Audit we make clear the variables and analytical categories that are critical to the formation, implementation and later collapse of the MLK project.

[B] *The context*

The Hunger Strike in 1981 was phased, with the first IRA member, Bobby Sands, dying on 5th May. He was followed by nine others, with each one associated with violent street protests in Republican areas, growing (critical) global interest and the politicisation of a resurgent Sinn Fein. A total of 100,000 people attended Sand's funeral by which time he had been elected as an MP to the British House of Commons, further ramping up pressure on the Thatcher administration. The Hunger Strike was called off in October 1981 and whilst the specific demands of the prisoners (such as the right not to wear prison clothes) were eventually granted, there was still no restoration or official recognition of their Special Category Status.

In 1994 the IRA declared its first ceasefire but it was not until Good Friday 1998 that a political *Agreement* was finally reached between the political parties including Sinn Fein. A central part of the Agreement also involved the early release, on license, of paramilitary prisoners and in 2000 the prison finally closed. Ownership of the site was subsequently transferred from the British government to the Northern Ireland administration through the *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister* (OFMDFM) in 2002. A number of former prisons, military bases and police stations were granted to OFMDFM as part of the *Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI)*. This was designed to modernise infrastructure, regenerate decommissioned sites and strengthen private (preferably international) investment led by the newly formed

Strategic Investment Board (SIB), which itself was modelled on the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) (Flynn, 2011). Within this context, the overall management and control of the project was put in the hands of a new group called the *Maze Long Kesh Programme Delivery Unit* (PDU) and whilst it had no legal status, it was part of the SIB and answerable to Junior Ministers in OFMDFM.

A Master Plan was developed proposing a sport stadium, events space for agricultural shows, an aviation museum based on the RAF heritage and crucially, an International Centre for Conflict Transformation. There was some uncertainty about what the Centre would contain, how it would remember the Hunger Strike, who would decide and how rival interests would be accommodated in telling their very different stories of prison life (Flynn, 2011). Flynn also showed that it became quickly embroiled in disagreements about the location of the sports stadium and its access to Belfast as well as its siting in an increasingly disputed and troubled project, not aided by the financial crises in 2008.

The Master Plan was subsequently scaled back but £18m of EU PEACE III funding was secured for what was now termed a *Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Centre* (PbCRC). The shift in language to dedicate the Centre to peacebuilding aimed to reframe the site as a place of learning and global research rather than to remembering the specifics of the Republican struggle. A number of former prison buildings were retained, and officially 'listed' as protected structures including the prison hospital where the Hunger Strikers died, the main administration block, watch towers, a church and one of the eight H-Blocks. The remaining buildings were demolished leaving the site available for sale for development as part of the wider regeneration scheme.

This section uses Healey's *Institutional Audit* to unpack the plan making process, the positions of the **stakeholders**, methods of engagement and the discursive strategies used to pursue respective interests and claims. Certainly, the PDU did attempt to deliver a wide and inclusive process by clearly mapping the range of **stakeholders** from local communities, prisoners and guards, political parties, professional archivists and potential users. Separate *arenas* were established to accommodate each set of interests, canvass positions, develop proposals and explore options. Whilst this enabled a broad debate about the site and its use it also surfaced deep sensitivities about the prison, its 'wounded' character and the multiple and contradictory *routines* about hurt, time and morality. This was most evident in a *discursive* tension between official narratives that stressed the economic value of the site and its regeneration potential and a sectarianised meta-narrative, which ultimately debilitated the process. Thus, *agreement was not reached* and the site (like the various atrocities, parades and flags) 'fixed' the past in a way that was not reducible to this version of **collaborative** working. But the analysis concludes by highlighting the value of the framework, not to reach consensus, but to point to some of the critical components that might offer a more engaged approach to the use of knowledge, authenticity and validation.

[B] The **stakeholders**

Figure 2 is important in this respect by mapping out the **stakeholders** in the use, management and development of MLK. It shows the importance of political interests and especially the distinction between Republicans and Unionist as summarised by a

representative from the academic sector: *'For Sinn Fein this is Robben Island, a misty-eyed look back on the heroic struggle ... but for Unionist it is a shrine to terrorism and the attitudes are visceral. There is no way a deal could be done'*. The statutory interests cut across planning, environmental management and heritage and local residents groups were involved as were victims groups and prisoner families. Prisoners and various ex-prisoner support groups, museum and tourism experts as well as prison officers and security force representatives were also identified in the clusters. Finally, there are a set of business stakeholders with an interest in the wider development and the universities who had delivered programmes in the prison and who were also viewed by the PDU as potential tenants of the peacebuilding centre.

Figure 2 Collaborative Stakeholder Map for the Maze Long Kesh

[B] Arenas for discussion

Six Reference Groups were established by the PDU and were organised around thematic interests including: Arts and Archives; Education and Learning; Civic Society; Public Services; Ex-prisoners; and Victims and Survivors. These Groups consisted of around 15-20 members and did structure a comparatively open dialogue around technical issues, sensitive subjects and how the development would accommodate the memories of people most affected by the prison and its legacy.

The Groups worked at one level ... everyone was respectful and we got a chance to give our views. I heard things I hadn't thought of and it made me think about my position on it (Ex-prisoner representative).

However, such consultative structures were precisely that and as will be shown later they had little or no decision making powers, access to resources or control over the

delivery and monitoring of the wider Master Plan. It ‘... *did move us to first base and consolidate the debate - we all knew what we were dealing with*’ (Academic representative) and it allowed the risks to be understood in a way that enabled the development to move to the delivery stage. The Working Groups met regularly over a two year period to define the issues, consider plans, advise the PDU on the way forward and ultimately, to endorse the overall Master Plan. Their work was informed by a various technical studies that included: a number of business plans; financial analysis and investment appraisals; architectural surveys; design concepts; and a heritage review on how the retained buildings would present the prison’s history. Whilst there were issues about the scheme among loyalists and some right-wing Unionist politicians, there were no significant political objections and it was thus safe to move the project to the implementation phase.

For that to happen, a new structure that was smaller, more business-led, politically appointed and implementation focused was needed. The **Maze Long Kesh Development Commission** (MLKDC) was established in October 2012 and very much modelled on the trusted semi-private Urban Development Corporations, which had led the regeneration of waterfronts across the US and the UK since the 1970s. Announcing plans for the new *Vision and Development Plan* (MLKDC, 2013) the Chairman stated that the scheme would generate £300m of investment and create 5000 new jobs:

Our vision, *From Peace to Prosperity*, is intended to demonstrate how economic development can help consolidate and build upon our peace. We will promote the PbCRC as a showcase to attract international developers and investors. From the interest already shown, I am confident that we will have in place £100m investment by 2016 (MLKDC, 2013, p.1).

From Peace to Prosperity emphasised the commercial opportunities on the site, its proximity to the main Belfast-Dublin motorway and the anchor tenants, including the aviation museum and the agricultural society were already committed to the project. Brochures, videos and commercial agents were employed to market the scheme that now carefully repositioned the PbCRC as an asset, able to connect to international researchers and resources. The use of the remaining H-Block or hospital and how they might be integrated with the Centre was not described or discussed in any detail in the Strategic Plan.

[B] *Routines*

The shift from the PDU to the Development Commission was reflected in changes in decision making styles and routines and the elevation of commercial and economic imperatives that would presumably override mundane sectarian concerns. Aesthetics also became an important feature of such reframing and rescaling. The MLKDC commissioned Daniel Libeskind, a world-renowned architect, best known for his design of the Ground Zero memorial in New York as the principal architect for the PbCRC. Libeskind is something of an expert in the architecture of trauma and had stamped his distinctive postmodern style on the Holocaust at the Jewish Museum in Berlin as well as preparing the plan for the reconstruction of the World Trade Centre. Ponzini and Nastasi (2011) highlight the value of *starchitects* in conferring legitimacy on sponsors, creating a spectacle above the ordinary and revalorising place, not for its functionality but for its symbolic value. However, Libeskind had to defend the scheme against accusations that it mimicked some of his earlier projects and that he failed to reflect local sensitivities and narratives:

I did not say that the design of the Centre should reflect any particular group's story. I listened extensively to the multiple perspectives presented and what I said was, 'all stories should be told', which has been everyone's goal from the start (quoted in the Belfast Telegraph, 10 May, 2013, p.1).

The Education and Learning Working Group focused, in particular, on the PbCRC as a potential international university research facility that could link the experiences of Northern Ireland with other sites of conflict and transformation. The Centre aimed to draw in international scholars and researchers, further decoupling it from the raw intimacies of May 1981 but even here there were also concerns about how different stories would be narrated. First, the PDU and then the Development Commission insisted that the term 'museum' was inappropriate and stressed 'peace' as the meta-narrative for the building. But, it was difficult to avoid the reality that the Centre and specifically the prison buildings were primarily artefacts through which the political history of the Northern Ireland conflict would inevitably be interpreted. The heritage and tourism consultants brought into advise on the complex suggested that a minimalist approach should be adopted to permit visitors to construct their own meaning and interpretation (and presumably avoid having to select what should be included and what should not be shown).

[B] *Discourses of memory*

At the outset the principal stakeholders did acknowledge the sensitivities of the site and how to articulate its significance as an icon of the Troubles but more importantly as an expression of a new time and a new politics. '*The site, to me is a microcosm of the peace processes*', (Member PDU) and '*it's probably the biggest symbol of the Troubles*' (Archival representative). Attempts to articulate these very different stories, one hopefully compensating for the other in order to create the balance needed to

progress the scheme were not necessarily inconsistent. However, the semiotic significance of the H-Blocks and how they are depicted on the wall murals of Belfast, memorials (including in the US and France) as well as in non-tangible culture such as songs, poems and oral histories is hard to resist: *'everyone's image of the site, is an aerial view of the site as an H block ... that's what everybody thinks of the site'* (Senior member, PDU).

However, as much as it galvanised Republican politics it also otherised and even marginalised different readings of both the Troubles and the prison. A significant **discourse** is shaped around the language of pain, with MLK variously described as a place of 'raw', 'fresh', 'hurt'. Interviewees likened the events around the prison to a wound in social memory reinforcing its scared qualities with a PDU member explaining that *'there's rawness about this site'*, to a prisoner representative who stated that *'there's an awful lot of hurt there'* referring especially to the families of prisoners. There were a number of prison breakouts by Republicans including the escape of 38 prisoners in 1983, when a Prison Officer died and six others were injured and a number of guards and security force members working at the prison had been killed by the IRA over its thirty-year history. Republicans did not oppose the inclusion of these deaths or the experiences of the state in the H-Blocks but the legacy of the prison in the lives of people who never actually went there demonstrates its potency, even in post-conflict **Northern Ireland**.

A distinctive **discourse** thus emerged around 'time' and specifically a concern that the rehabilitation of the site was too hasty, as one Unionist politician explained *'we are not ready for this yet'*. When is a good time to tell the prison's history, if at all or under what

conditions was unclear but officials also recognised that *'the passage of time is no bad thing perhaps'* (Museums Representative) and *'it takes time, to go through that whole process, but it's a necessary time'* (OFMDFM representative). Resonating with Moshenska's (2009) critique of the impacts of bombing and destruction upon memory, participants evoked wound'-like imagery, stating that *'it is only closed a year, thirty years since the Hunger Strike, twenty years since people got out under the Good Friday Agreement, it's still raw for people'* (PDU Member). Eschebach (2011) argued that living memory must expire in war sites before the question of how to tell their story can be dispassionately weighed as summed by a community sector **stakeholder**: *'I think it's maybe just too, too fresh just to keep something ... but time will tell'*.

[B] Follow through to implementation

Ultimately, the quality and efficiency of collaborative planning processes are evaluated against what they produced as material consensual outcomes. Doyle and Wiedenman (2014) argued that the problem is that the start-up phase, with a wide identification of **stakeholders**, inclusive governance and multi-method consultation processes involve comparatively easy commitments for an authority to make. Turning these initial debates into agreement required more manipulative and less **collaborative** tactics: *'you have to nurse it almost like an infant, and build up the trust ... it was more of a black art than a science'* (PDU Member). Moreover, the authority of the Reference Groups and their role in decision making was also questionable or at least unclear, *'They weren't actually making the decisions and we've been very clear that you know we refer to them and take their views into account'* (Senior Member, PDU). **Stakeholders** were a *'resource'* through which interpretations of the site were managed but for some participants they descended into a mere *'talking shop'*

(Residents association representative). As the process progressed their status as **stakeholders** rather than passive consultees with various levels of interest in the project gradually unravelled: *'I think the level we were involved at wasn't at decision maker level, it was, "this is what we propose here", are you alright with that?' It wasn't involving, it wasn't a built up process'* (Future Site Occupier) and *'... we don't have the same effect on the people who are holding the purse strings'* (Site Occupier). The use consultative processes to incorporate disagreeable interests is not new but ultimately the failure to deliver an agreed outcome, in part, rested on the quality of the engagement and seriousness of the discussion in the planning process.

Others were more cynical and saw the collaborative design purely in legitimisation terms and that *'there was a blueprint sitting in the cupboard that hadn't been brought out yet ... there's always another agenda'* (Residents association representative). In short, there was a parallel process with the outward facing collaborative design presenting an ordered, objective, difficult but ultimately inclusive attempt to produce agreement running alongside a hidden, politicised deal making trade-off to secure the one thing that mattered; the Republican story of the Hunger Strike:

I'm aware that it's almost like a dual management, they're managing the interest groups, and then obviously they take the feedback ... I'm not too sure exactly what it's achieving' (Archival representative).

Republicans said remarkably little publicly about the MLK, always downplaying the prison history and elevating peacebuilding centre and the value of the **Northern Ireland** process for states and societies coming out of conflict. The Loyalist Orange Order along with other Unionist politicians, including some from the DUP, formed a *Raze the Maze* campaign and gathered over 10,000 signatures on an online petition to

campaign for the demolition of the whole site. As the 2014 European and local government elections loomed, the DUP were under increasing pressure from Loyalists, other Unionist political parties and the Orange Order about their tacit endorsement of the project and formally withdrew their support in August 2013. This effectively ended the project and shortly after the EU also withdrew the £18m from the PEACE III Programme. The DUP leader published an *open letter*, which highlighted the fictitious nature of the opposition but maintained a veto over the development and especially the content of the retained buildings:

‘Since this present deceitful Maze campaign began we have consistently and frequently stressed that we will not permit any shrine to be erected at the Maze and that no decision had been taken about the content and programme for any new Peace Centre or the use of the retained buildings, but that has not stopped our political opponents from inventing stories and seeking to frighten and raise concerns by agitating those who have suffered most from violent terrorism’ (quoted in the Belfast Telegraph, 15 August, 2013, p.1, *Maze U-Turn: Peter Robinson’s Letter in Full to Senior Party Figures*).

By 2015 the agricultural society had moved on to the site and the aviation museum is in the process of being developed although hampered by a lack of funding. Sinn Féin and Republican ex-prisoners maintain that the PbCRC and the retained buildings will be developed and Libeskind recently claimed that it would be simply a matter of time as all such toxic projects go through disagreement and negotiation before they are finalised.

[A] Conclusion

A fresh set of inter-party talks were established in late 2014 to deal with the past, parades and the use of cultural symbols and the future of MLK is now part of these negotiations. Ultimately, its development will be sorted by the ethnic poker that

characterises these arrangements, not **collaborative** planning regimes and discursive practices. Such *wicked problems* are not necessarily reducible to communicative deliberation but the analysis does not render these approaches redundant, especially as a method in mediation and peacebuilding. The PDU and subsequently the MLKDC invested in **collaborative** concepts but these were limited. Initially, the authorities sought to foreground the economic at the expense of its political history and contested meanings. The modalities of (neo)liberal peace underpinned the project by appealing to investors, highlighting its strategic location and branding it as an icon of modernisation that had seamlessly displaced its violent past. There also was an attempt to decouple the project from the specifics of the site and re-present its meaning by jumping scales and appealing to its international, aesthetic and research significance.

Graham and McDowell (2007) are wrong to dismiss the MLK as the product of a manipulative and selective Republican statecraft. These places and there are others, cannot be erased or devalued because they do not comply with the reimagining of **Northern Ireland** as a liberal, economically progressive and socially readjusted place. But nor is it helpful to see them endlessly reproduce a form of sectarian ethno-nationalism and elements of the process have implications for the management of places and events with such disruptive potential in peace processes. Some **stakeholders** are more important than others but the process did not reveal or debate (in a discursive sense) what the explicit positions of ex-prisoners, families, prison officers, security forces and victims were on the actual development. Their claims about MLK needed to be more openly presented and the basis of such claims made transparent and open to verification and falsification. As the **discourse** descended into

predictable sectarianism, the claims about the prison and the peacebuilding centre became more hysterical, unfounded and visceral. The DUP First Minister admitted as much in the open letter that effectively collapsed the project. The centrality of *knowledge*, its validity and reliability and the capacity of others to unpack it would not necessarily have saved the development but it would have made clearer the nature of claims and counterclaims and how to treat evaluate their relative merits. The Working Groups were supported with largely technical and especially financial information but lay knowledge and the lived experiences of prisoners and victims does not mean that such evidence becomes inevitably inferior or sectarian.

Handling such sensitivities requires a different range of skills and competencies among planners and project managers, especially when they work within state structures, cultures and laws. Professional routines may have leant to the collaborative but how to identify the conditions of strife and how various forms of power are constitutive of agonistic relations, requires a stronger engagement with the methods of peace building and conflict transformation. Such interdisciplinarity will not guarantee success either but it does highlight the need to rethink how a range of professionals, especially those involved in place-making are central to political stability. In particular, there is a need to see such processes, methodologies and skills move outside community relations, political mediation and the peace sector and into the mainstream cultures, practices and educational frameworks of the range of professionals charged with spatial development.

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Figure 1 **Maze Long Kesh** photographed shortly after its closure (SOURCE)



Figure 2 Collaborative Stakeholder Map for the Maze Long Kesh

